

Obama Admin. Reappoints 9/11 Health Coordinator

Wednesday, 09 September 2009

New York, NY – Today, the Department of Health and Human Services announced the reappointment of Dr. John Howard as Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and as the nation's 9/11 Health Coordinator. Dr. Howard was put in charge of federal 9/11 health programs in February 2006. In July 2008, the Bush Administration removed Dr. Howard from his posts as NIOSH Director and 9/11 Health Coordinator with little explanation and despite widespread praise of his job performance.

In a letter sent earlier this year, Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, Peter King, Michael McMahon, and Eliot Engel, along with 9 of their colleagues in the New York delegation, encouraged President Obama to reappoint Dr. Howard as 9/11 Health Coordinator. A copy of the lawmakers's letter can be found below.

"The reappointment of Dr. Howard is an important step toward giving 9/11 responders and others the health care and compensation they deserve," said Rep. Maloney. "I applaud President Obama and Secretary Sebelius for making the right call in reappointing Dr. Howard, who built the federal government's existing 9/11 health programs from the ground up, and who earned nearly universal praise for his work to help those who lost their health because of the 9/11 attacks. Dr. Howard is trusted on both sides of the aisle and will be an outstanding addition to President Obama's team."

"The reappointment of Dr. Howard sends a very strong signal that this Administration is serious about 9/11 health care," said Rep. Nadler. "President Obama and Secretary Sebelius should be commended for their decision, and those of us who work on these issues are very grateful for their support. It will be great to have Dr. Howard back on the team, because he brings a wealth of experience and expertise that is sorely needed to ensure proper care and treatment for all those suffering from 9/11 related health problems – first responders and community members alike."

"Dr. Howard has worked tirelessly on behalf of the heroes of 9/11 and has proven to be an outstanding public servant who has always put the victims first," said Rep. King.

"I applaud the Administration for reappointing Dr. Howard," said Rep. McMahon. "We need continuity to ensure that our 9/11 health programs run efficiently and Dr. Howard's reappointment will provide this. As one of the foremost authorities on 9/11 health care issues, there is no one better to be our 9/11 Health Coordinator."

Rep. Engel said, "President Obama and the Health and Human Services Administration did the right thing in reappointing Dr. Howard. He has been praised by all involved for his work in helping those made ill following the terror attack on 9/11. The Bush Administration made a mistake in dismissing an outstanding public servant devoted to policy over politics. This sensitive position deserves a man of Dr. Howard's capability as do the people he did so much to help."

Earlier this year, Maloney, Nadler and their colleagues in the New York congressional delegation reintroduced H.R. 847, the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, which would provide comprehensive health care and compensation for those sickened or injured in the aftermath of 9/11. While the Members of Congress hope to pass the bill this year, leadership is still needed in Washington to make sure that current federal 9/11 health programs continue to provide care to ailing 9/11 first responders, lower Manhattan residents, workers, students and others.

Background

In July 2008, the Bush Administration informed Dr. Howard that he would not be reappointed to a second term as NIOSH Director , despite praise from industry and labor leaders regarding Dr. Howard's service protecting American workers.

In February 2006, the New York congressional delegation successfully convinced the Bush Administration to appoint Dr. Howard to serve as the federal government's 9/11 Health Coordinator ([Click here for a copy of HHS's letter announcing Dr. Howard's appointment](#)).

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February 23, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to strongly recommend that Dr. John Howard be chosen to run the World Trade Center Health Programs, which operate within the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

From February 2006 through August 2008, Dr. Howard was the Coordinator of the World Trade Center Health Programs, while he was also the Director of NIOSH. In his role as coordinator, Dr. Howard built from the ground up the federally-funded WTC Medical Monitoring and Treatment programs that initially served WTC responders in the New York-area, but later expanded to meet needs of responders around the country and community members who lived, worked, or went to school in lower Manhattan in the aftermath of 9/11.

Dr. Howard has received accolades for his outstanding work on behalf of the heroes of 9/11, gaining universal praise from labor, community groups, and health care providers alike. He has proven to be an outstanding public servant who never allows political ideology to trump helping those sick from 9/11. In fact, he was among the Bush appointees most trusted and respected by Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle. He is the kind of administrator we need to help the heroes who helped the nation in our time of need.

Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY

JERROLD NADLER

PETER KING

NITA M. LOWEY

ELIOT L. ENGEL

MICHAEL E. McMAHON

STEVE ISRAEL

EDOLPHUS TOWNS

JOSEPH CROWLEY

GARY L. ACKERMAN

ANTHONY D. WEINER

YVETTE D. CLARKE

PAUL TONKO

JOSÉ SERRANO

Members of Congress